

THE CCM PHILOSOPHY SPREADING AMONG INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS

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In recent days I have warned about the “adaptation” of Contemporary Christian Music at independent Baptist churches and schools.

This is going on widely, but even more serious than the “adaptation” of the contemporary music is the adaptation of the contemporary philosophy. Of course, the two things go hand-in-hand, which is why contemporary music brings such radical and rapid changes to churches.

I trust that church leaders will heed our warning and renounce the following philosophies. Every fundamental Baptist church and school today needs to have a top to bottom review of what is being taught and what is not being taught, of what is being emphasized and not emphasized. Every teacher should be vetted so that no foreign philosophy is creeping in.

I am convinced that every Independent Baptist church that refuses to plainly and boldly and unhesitatingly renounce both the music and the philosophy of CCM will be fully contemporary in stance within 10 years.

Consider some examples of the CCM philosophy that has been espoused to me in recent correspondence by students at Baptist colleges:

1. GRACE MEANS THAT IN QUESTIONABLE THINGS WE SHOULD COME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF THE BROADER, THE LEAST STRICT, THE PATH OF GREATER LIBERTY. STRICTNESS IS A MARK OF LEGALISM AND IS A GRACE KILLER.

A Bible college student wrote as follows:

“Another thing that is taught is that if there is a doubt or question concerning practice, standards, or anything else, that because we are under grace, we should choose the broader path, otherwise we are still acting under yoke of bondage” (Northland University student).

Grace is certainly at the heart and soul of biblical Christianity. The true gospel is called “the grace of Christ” (Galatians 1:6). The grace of God, though, does not lead to “the broader path.”

This has long been a New Evangelical principle. Consider the following statement by Charles Swindoll:

“There was a time ... when I had a position that life was so rigid I would fight for every jot and tittle. I mean, I couldn’t list enough things that I’d die for. The older I get, the shorter that list gets,

frankly. ... More than ever we need grace-awakened ministers who free rather than bind” (*Grace Awakening*).

Calvary Contender editor Jerry Huffman observed that Swindoll’s book leaves “the impression that rules or restrictions upon the believer steal from him the exuberance and joy of the Christian life and relegate him to a morbid and dreary existence.”

This is precisely the philosophy that is permeating IFB churches and schools today.

In the aforementioned book, Swindoll implies that those who strive for strict moral purity are legalists who need to learn grace. He claims that it is legalistic to make prohibitions about movies, dress, music, dancing, etc.

Actually Swindoll redefines grace as a form of license.

Biblical grace teaches a strict form of Christian living.

“For THE GRACE OF GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from ALL INIQUITY, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS” (Titus 2:11-14).

To live in such a manner requires the continual exercise of judgment and extreme caution pertaining to all forms of entertainment, etc.

The “grace” that is typically taught by Contemporary Christian Music performers is not biblical grace because it does not produce strict separation from worldliness. It does not produce peculiar people; it produces worldly-minded people.

We are to “have NO fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11). That is a very strict standard and a very narrow walk.

We are to keep the New Testament precepts “WITHOUT SPOT, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:14). A “spot” is a small thing, so Paul was teaching Timothy to pay attention to every detail of Scripture.

This is the very “jot and tittle” strictness that the contemporary crowd rejects and that is now permeating IFB churches.

Further, a strict position is a safe position. The Bible repeatedly and emphatically warns about spiritual dangers, particularly in the context of the end times.

There are temptations and snares. The devil is wily and subtle and beguiling. He appears as an angel of light and his ministers appear as ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11). There are seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. There will be a great falling away, a turning from sound

doctrine to fables. There will be men who operate by cunning craftiness and that lie in wait to deceive.

We must therefore prove all things and try the spirits.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

2. IT IS WRONG TO HAVE A CRITICAL EYE.

A graduate of Lancaster Baptist College wrote the following:

“[When I first arrived] I had a critical eye toward all that they had going ... [But] I would rather give account for singing songs written by contemporary artists but sung in a conservative way than for having a critical attitude toward a fellow man of God.”

We don't have to make a choice between being wishy-washy about songs written by contemporary artists or having a critical attitude. We should rather aim to have a “critical eye” without having a “critical spirit.”

Like judging, criticism can take two forms--carnal and godly.

The Bible commends a “critical eye” in the sense of exercising keen spiritual discernment and testing everything by God’s Word.

We are exhorted to “prove ALL things” (1 Thess. 5:21). That requires a LOT of judging and “criticism”!

Paul had a critical eye toward Peter’s hypocrisy and Demas’ worldliness and Phygellus’ inconsistency and Philetus’ heresy and Alexander the Coopersmith’s evil (2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17; 4:10, 14).

Christ Himself had a critical eye toward the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and the Saducees’ rationalism and the disciples’ unbelief (Mat. 23; Lk. 24:25).

When I went to Bible School at Tennessee Temple in the mid-1970s, I was only one year old in the Lord, but I had a powerful dose of salvation, I had been devouring the Bible, and I knew that God wanted me to test everything by it. Psalm 119:128; John 8:31-32; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21 were as precious and real to me then as today.

I began to see some things that I felt were wrong scripturally, particularly the shallow, unscriptural soul-winning technique I have since labeled Quick Prayerism, the carnal over-exaltation of man, the big-numbers, big-church braggadociosness, and the refusal on the part of the leaders and visiting speakers to speak out plainly on some very important issues.

I had a “critical eye,” and insofar as I had a wrong attitude and lack of mercy and compassion and “balance,” I was wrong, but insofar as I was identifying things that were unscriptural and wrong, I was right.

By God's grace, I have grown in my spiritual life since then, and I believe and hope that I am wiser and more gracious than I was when I was a new Christian, but I also thank the Lord that I have not given up my “critical eye” in a biblical sense. I still reject the things I rejected decades ago, because they are still unscriptural.

If ever there were a time to have a critical eye in a right sense it is today. It will protect you spiritually. It is the devil who wants everyone to give up “criticism.” If we do that, we have no shield of protection and there is no way to bring correction to error.

I am deeply concerned that so many IFB churches and schools are putting humanistic eye wash in the biblical critical eye.

At the same time, we must guard against a carnal, critical spirit. James described the right spirit:

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your

hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:13-15).

I have often emphasized the importance of such things as giving church leaders the benefit of the doubt. My free eBook *Keys to Fruitful Church Membership* emphasizes such things. So does the article “I Am Not Your Pastor.”

The CCM philosophy of not being critical about music comes from the charismatic movement, which teaches people to “let go and let God,” to go with the flow, to not “put God in a box.” This was the philosophy of John Wimber and the Vineyard churches. It is the philosophy of Hillsong. It is the philosophy of most of the CCM artists.

The Bible teaches just the opposite. We are to be very strict, very cautious.

The philosophy expressed above by the graduate of an IFB college in an e-mail to me is something he was taught at school. The following is from the school’s web site from 2006:

“Students at West Coast Baptist College will be taught the importance of appreciating and growing spiritually through the means of godly music. Students will also be taught that worldly music and Christian rock music are destructive to their maturing as a Christian. West Coast Baptist College believes in the importance of following the Scriptural admonitions regarding music found in Ephesians 5; therefore, our emphasis revolves around psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The 200-voice choir of Lancaster Baptist Church, as well as all musical groups and instrumentalists, adhere to conservative music standards, emphasizing a distinct melody and godly music theory. STUDENTS WILL NOT, HOWEVER, BE TAUGHT TO HAVE A JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT OF OTHER MINISTRIES WITH SLIGHT VARIATIONS IN MUSIC STYLE FROM THAT WHICH IS TAUGHT AT WEST COAST BAPTIST COLLEGE. THEY WILL BE TAUGHT THAT A CRITICAL AND JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT IS AS GRIEVOUS TO THE LORD AS PERHAPS AN UNINTENTIONAL VARIATION IN MUSIC STYLE BY A LIKE-MINDED FUNDAMENTAL CHURCH.”

The first statement about the importance of having the right music and the destructive nature of worldly music is largely negated by the second statement about not judging or being critical, and it is the second statement that has become the predominant philosophy at West Coast. It has allowed the music people to push the boundaries farther each year.

While we should be gracious and wise in our judgments, we must judge! While we should not be carnally critical in attitude, we should most definitely be critical of sin and worldliness and error!

I would ask at what point is it right to be judgmental and critical toward music? If it has a backbeat? If it has other forms of dance syncopation? If it has non-resolving chord patterns? If it incorporates worldly vocal techniques? If it is repetitious? If it has a vague message? If it is written by CCM people for charismatic mystical worship? If it is written by those who deny the Trinity and promote a non-judgmental god? If it is written by those who believe that Roman Catholics are part of the “body of Christ” and who associate with the pope?

Where are we allowed to draw clear lines and become “judgmental” without breaking West Coast’s rules?

In my estimation, it is not possible to obey this school’s rules on music without disobeying God’s rules.

3. PERSONAL EDIFICATION IS A MAJOR STANDARD OF MUSIC.

A graduate of Lancaster Baptist College wrote the following:

“Can a Christian not be edified by these songs? Is it not more important for a person to be edified?”

Another Bible college student wrote:

“The music standards were changed so that the students could listen to any music they wanted to, as long as it didn’t offend their conscience” (Northland University student).

These statements reflect a perfect description of the CCM and emerging church philosophy. If I am “blessed” by the music, it must be OK.

I have read at least 100 of their books, have attended major conferences with press credentials, have attended their church services for research, and have communicated personally with many of them, and the CCM crowd could not state their philosophy more clearly than it is being stated by students at many fundamental Baptist colleges today.

What is edification and how does it happen? “Edification” means to build up spiritually, of course, and it happens by God’s Spirit through God’s Word. True edification in a biblical sense can only happen in accordance with God’s Word. Acts 9:31 associates edification with walking in the fear of the Lord.

“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied” (Acts 9:31).

Knowing the deception of the human heart, the standard of “I was blessed by the music” is insufficient and dangerous. The devil is clever and subtle and can appeal to the “religious” side of the fallen flesh.

I must test every sense of “blessing” by God’s Word.

If I am acting contrary to Scripture and still claim that I am being edified and blessed, I am deceived. This is blind mysticism.

Multitudes who attended Kathryn Kuhlman’s preaching meetings said they were blessed.

Multitudes who attend papal masses say they are blessed.

Multitudes who fall on the floor and speak in gibberish in charismatic meetings say they are blessed.

Pentecostals who have heard voices telling them to love the Roman Catholic Church say they are blessed by these experiences.

Those who attend Marsha Stevens' concerts and hear her lesbian "Christian" music will tell you that they are blessed.

We must be very, very careful in this age that our "blessings" are not spiritual deceptions.

Jesus warned that in the last hours of the age false teaching will be so subtle that "insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Mat. 24:24).

When it comes to CCM, its use is disobedience to Scriptures such as Romans 12:2; 16:17; Ephesians 5:11-16; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:5; 4:3-4; Titus 2:11-12; James 4:4; and 1 John 2:15-17.

It is important to understand that mysticism is sweeping the planet, both in the secular, religious, Christian, and now fundamentalist realms. In the book *What Is the Emerging Church?* we document the fact that mysticism is a major element of the emerging church, and to hold the principle that "personal edification" is an important standard for testing music is to be on the emerging mystical road.

Rock music has always been mystical. It is all about a good feeling. The 60s song "Hooked on a Feeling" summarizes the whole thing. Modern society is hooked on the feeling produced by sensual music. It stirs up powerful emotions. It doesn't even need words.

Sun Records founder Sam Phillips, who recorded some of the first rock & roll hits, including Elvis' first recording in 1954, knew the power of rock. Reminiscing many years later about why rock music became such a social phenomenon, he said, "It all came out of THAT INFECTIOUS BEAT and those young people wanting to FEEL GOOD by listening to some records" ("Rock 'n' Roll Pioneer Sam Phillips Dies," *USA Today*, July 30, 2003).

Rock music can be hard or soft, fast or slow, loud or quiet, and it is still rock because it still has a sensual swing rhythm that moves the body and it is still "infectious" or addictive.

If I need sensual, body-moving music to be "edified," and if sound doctrine sung in a sacred "old fashioned" manner doesn't do the job, then I am addicted to sensual music, and it is easy to mistake a sensual feeling for spiritual edification.

A good feeling does not equate to biblical edification. True edification is always in conformity to God's Word.

The "personal blessing" factor is a very shallow, insufficient, and dangerous standard by which to judge Christian music.

4. LOVE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MUSIC.

When Bible-believing Christians take the Word of God and measure leaders, churches, denominations and movements by it, they are invariably charged with a lack of love. A woman wrote to me and said:

“You preach separatism from heresy. WHAT ABOUT LOVE? ... The lost will never be reached through SUCH HATRED” (Letter from a reader, May 1997).

A graduate of an fundamental Baptist college wrote along the same line:

“Last I checked, the Lord Jesus Christ was more concerned about our love than He was about our music or anything else”

To this generation, the “negative” aspects of “fundamentalist” Christianity are unloving. To carefully test things by the Bible is a lack of compassion. To mark and avoid false teachers is hateful. To warn of false gospels and to discipline heretics and to separate from error is mean-spirited.

A few years ago, evangelist Jack Van Impe, a former fundamentalist, rejected biblical separatism and adopted the ecumenical philosophy. He immediately began contrasting biblical discernment and separation with love:

“Let’s forget our labels and come together in love, and the pope has called for that. I had 400 verses on love. Till I die I will proclaim nothing but love for all my brothers and sisters in Christ, my Catholic brothers and sisters, Protestant brothers and sisters, Christian Reformed, Lutherans, I don’t care what label you are. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.”

This is the popular view of love: love doesn’t judge, isn’t critical, doesn’t separate. But it is a false and dangerous position.

If we define love by the Bible itself, we find that it is never set in contrast to godly judgment and holiness and a zeal for the truth.

John said that godly love purifies the saints and keeps God’s commandments (1 John 3:1-3; 5:1-3).

This is true Christian love, not the feel-good, rock & roll-driven mysticism of the contemporary movement that preaches world-loving license and broadminded tolerance.

The contemporary crowd is confused about the definition of love.

Love is essential, of course. God is love, and the Bible says that without love “I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

To human thinking, “love” is a tender feeling, a romantic sentiment. This generation speaks of “falling in love” and “falling out of love.” This refers to an emotion.

To this ecumenical generation, “love” is broadmindedness and non-judgmental tolerance.

This is not what the Bible says about love. Consider the following Scriptures:

“Jesus answered and said unto him, IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

“And this I pray, that your LOVE MAY ABOUND YET MORE AND MORE IN KNOWLEDGE AND IN ALL JUDGMENT; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:9-10).

“For THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).

“And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which WE COMMAND YOU. And the Lord direct your hearts into THE LOVE OF GOD, and into the patient waiting for Christ. Now WE COMMAND YOU, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us (2 Th. 3:4-6).

Biblical love is obedience to God and His Word. We see in 2 Thessalonians 3 that the love of God is sandwiched between two verses that emphasize obedience to God’s commandments, including separation from disobedient brethren!

Love is not a warm fuzzy feeling. Christian love is not an emotion, though emotion is closely associated with it.

Feelings of love come and go in this present life, but the action of biblical love can be steadfast. For a woman to love her husband means she submits to him and serves him according to the Bible as unto the Lord. For a man to love his wife means he treats her in the way the Bible commands. The emotion of love is important, but it is a very secondary thing, and true love is not dependent on an emotion.

Biblical love is spiritually and doctrinally vigilant. It is based on knowledge and judgment from God’s Word. It proves all things and approves only those things that reflect the will of God.

Was the Lord Jesus Christ unloving when He drove the moneychangers from the temple with a whip (John 2:15-17), or when He looked on the people “with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts” (Mk. 3:5), or when he called the Pharisees a “generation of vipers” (Mat. 23:33), or when he addressed Peter as Satan (Matt. 16:23), or when He instructed His disciples not to give holy things unto “dogs” and “swine” (Mat. 7:6), or when He called His own disciples “fools and slow of heart to believe” (Luke 24:25), or when He said that He hates the deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6; 15)?

Was the apostle Paul unloving when he rebuked Peter publicly for his compromise (Galatians 1)? Or when he named the names of false teachers and compromisers such as Hymenaeus and Alexander ten different times in the Pastoral Epistles? Was the apostle Paul unloving when he forbade women to teach or to usurp authority over men in 1 Timothy 2:12?

Of course not! And neither are preachers today unloving when they follow in these godly footsteps.

Jesus said to the churches, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

Biblical love does not mean that I ignore things that are wrong and things that are spiritually and morally injurious.

The contemporary crowd is very confused about the definition of biblical love.

The contemporary crowd is confused about the direction of love

The first direction of love must be toward God.

When discussing these matters, the contemporary crowd talks much about love of man, but what about the love of God? According to the Lord Jesus Christ, what is the greatest commandment?

“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mat. 22:35-39).

The first and great commandment is not to love one’s neighbor. The first and great commandment is to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind.

The contemporary crowd points a finger at the Bible-believing “fundamentalist” and charges him with a lack of love toward men because he exercises judgment and discipline and separation.

What, though, about love for God and His Word?

The ecumenist tells me that I need to love all the denominations regardless of doctrine. I reply that I need to love God and His Truth first, and that means that I will obey the Bible, and that means I will measure, mark, and avoid those who are committed to doctrinal error.

A genuine love for God requires that I care more about God’s Word and God’s will than about men and their feelings and opinions and programs.

We agree with Charles Haddon Spurgeon when he said:

“On all hands we hear cries for unity in this, and unity in that; but to our mind the main need of this age is not compromise, but conscientiousness. ‘First pure, then peaceable.’ It is easy to cry ‘a confederacy,’ but that union which is not based upon the truth of God is rather a conspiracy than a communion. Charity by all means; but honesty also. Love, of course, but love to God as well as love to men, and love of truth as well as love of union. It is exceedingly difficult in these times to preserve one’s fidelity before God and one’s fraternity among men. Should not the former be preferred to the latter if both cannot be maintained? We think so” (Spurgeon, “The Down Grade - Second Article,” *The Sword and the Trowel*, April 1887, Notes, p. 16).

The direction of love not only must be toward God but it must also be toward those who are in spiritual danger.

The contemporary crowd tells me that I need to love the Roman Catholic, the emergent, etc., but they are largely silent on the subject of love for those who are deceived by these people.

We are charged with being unloving, for example, when we expose the fact that the late Pope John Paul II or Mother Teresa promoted a false sacramental gospel and venerated Mary as the Queen of Heaven. But the fact is that we love people enough to warn of false gospels so they will not be end up in eternal hell.

In about 1980 my wife and I had a discussion with a Catholic nun who worked with the Sisters of Charity, the organization founded by Mother Teresa. She said she “loved Jesus” and doubtless was a very earnest, religious, self-sacrificing person, but she believed that Jesus is the consecrated wafer of the mass, that Mary was assisting in her salvation, and that even Hindus who pray to their gods sincerely will go to heaven.

The Christian rock approach would be to accept this nun’s “love for Jesus” as genuine and not to analyze her beliefs very carefully and certainly not to criticize them. The CCM approach, in fact, would be to join this nun in worshipping God with praise songs.

But that’s not true biblical love. It’s not love for God who has given His Word and demanded that we honor it and it alone, and it is not love for the nun herself, who according to the Bible worships a false christ and follows a false gospel that will lead to hell.

To love a false teacher does not mean that I turn a blind eye to his error and strive to have unity with him regardless of his doctrine. It means that I obey the Bible and mark and avoid him (Romans 16:17), that I expose his error publicly to protect those who might be led astray by his teaching.

A shepherd who loves wolves more than the sheep is a confused and harmful shepherd.

In conclusion, we quote from the words of James Henley Thornwell, a staunch Old School Presbyterian preacher who fought against theological modernism in the 19th century. He was the sixth president of South Carolina College (today the University of South Carolina). He was

weary with the compromising evangelicals of his day, who said they loved the truth but were soft in their stance and refused to withstand heresy boldly.

Note his powerful words and his correct understanding of biblical love:

“To employ soft words and honeyed phrases in discussing questions of everlasting importance; to deal with errors that strike at the foundations of all human hope as if they were harmless and venial mistakes; to bless where God disapproves, and to make apologies where He calls us to stand up like men and assert, though it may be the aptest method of securing popular applause in a sophistical age, is cruelty to man and treachery to Heaven. Those who on such subjects attach more importance to the rules of courtesy than they do to the measures of truth do not defend the citadel, but betray it into the hands of its enemies. Love for Christ, and for the souls for whom He died, will be the exact measure of our zeal in exposing the dangers by which men’s souls are ensnared” (quoted in a sermon by George Sayles Bishop, author of *The Doctrines of Grace and Kindred Themes*).

5. WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF MUSIC AND EXTERNAL STANDARDS.

“There was a huge push, at least toward me and another one of my friends who was struggling with the changes, TO RETHINK WHAT OUR PARENTS HAVE TAUGHT US. I was told by Dr. Olson and one of the dorm supervisors that I must rethink my music philosophy and make sure I didn’t just believe what I am taught, but I need to choose my own standards” (Northland University student).

While it is good always to test everything by Scripture, the Bible itself warns us not to remove ancient landmarks (Proverbs 22:28). This does not mean that we blindly follow tradition or that we accept something just because our parents did it, but it does mean that we not reject tradition lightly.

But Christian rock has the same insubordinate attitude that its intimate friend secular rock has. It is quick to overthrow absolutely anything or anyone that gets in its way.

Rock & roll burst on the scene in the 1950s and 1960s chock full of insolence toward tradition and authority.

And the e-mails I receive from young people who defend CCM represent the same insolence. Typically they are filled with mocking ridicule and a flippant spirit, and this attitude is applauded in circles that love CCM.

Consider the following from a student at West Coast Baptist College in response to my warnings about the music, and don’t forget that this is a mere kid writing to a grandfather preacher who has been in the spiritual battle for nearly 40 years:

“Your hypocrisy and misinterpretation and out-of-context use of the Bible sickens me. May God have mercy on your soul you arrogant, raunchy man. I cannot help but wonder if those who call you

shows clearly who you are. I challenge you: post my previous email. Write a smart reply to the issues it addresses. Why haven't you? Because you're full of holes, arrogance and grotesque pride."

To write and "rip into" someone like me who warns about CCM is the sporting, clever thing to do. "Let's see how ridiculous we can make that old fundamentalist look. Who cares whether we are speaking the truth with godly respect. We're ever so cool, and we're having fun, and we all know that he's a nutcase."

Young people have every right to challenge their elders and to disagree with them if they believe it is necessary, but God hates pride and mocking and disrespect. When God-loving Noah had a temporary moral failing, two of his sons showed honor to him even in that difficult situation, while one son showed disrespect and mocking. Which sons were blessed?

God's Word is unequivocal on this matter.

Leviticus 19:2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Proverbs 14:3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

I personally know the issue of rebellion from every perspective. I was an insolent adolescent. For many years, I reacted to authority in the flesh, because I was unsaved and I lived in the flesh. As a teenager, I rebelled against my dad in a pretty vicious way. I mocked him and told him he wasn't going to tell me how to live or how long my hair was going to be or anything else. I really broke his heart, but I didn't care. Everything was about me. When I was drafted into the army, I did enough to survive and get an honorable discharge, but I was a rebel through and through, thumbing my nose at authority every chance I got. When I got out of the army, I was still a rebel. I made two foolish vows: one, not to wear green again, and two, not to cut my hair again. I became a rock & roll New Age hippie. I grew my hair down to my shoulders, and if I thought that someone was offended by it, that made my day! Glory, hallelujah!

The attitude that I have experienced countless times from CCM defenders reminds me very much of the attitude I had as a lost, drug-addicted, rock-drunk hippie.

Since I was saved, though, I have had a different spirit by God's grace. I'm not saying I can't get in the flesh, but thank God I no longer "live in the flesh." There has been a tremendous change in

my attitude toward authority, and I know that a humble, respectful spirit is what pleases the Lord. I have stood against error since I was first saved, after the example of Psalm 119:128, but I have always tried to do it in the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

And James 3:13,

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.”

If your contemporary philosophy has granted you the liberty to mock and disrespect elders and spiritual authorities, to do anything but show godly humility -- you are self-deceived because this type of thing is far more of this world than of Christ.

The fact that rock & roll has always been about thumbing your nose at authority and doing your own thing is 180 degrees contrary to the Biblical faith, and this is one of the many fundamental reasons why I reject rock & roll in every form (hard or soft). This attitude is a godly, solidly Scriptural reason that will stand up at the judgment seat of Christ.

Defend “Christian” rock and any other type of rock if you will, but I will not. Disagree with me if you feel you must, but don’t mock me and treat me like a fool. A sincere believer who is trying to take God’s Word seriously can be wrong, but he is no fool.

Intimately associated with the insolence of secular rock and Christian rock (and even the soft CCM) is the unconcern about offence. Consider the following Scriptures:

Romans 14:21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

1 Corinthians 10:32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

The Bible warns about giving unnecessary offence. Paul taught that even in matters of liberty, matters in which the Bible is silent and in which I thus have personal liberty before God, we are to restrict our liberty if we know we are causing offence and possible spiritual harm.

I find these Scriptures very interesting in light of the attitude that I have typically encountered among Contemporary Christian Music defenders. Paul was willing to give up things such as meat which are not wrong in themselves, but the CCM crowd is not willing to give up anything whatsoever, not even deeply questionable things.

When you try to explain to the CCM crowd that as a young person you were almost spiritually destroyed by rock music and that you are convinced from personal experience and from the Word of God that every aspect of rock is of the world, the flesh, and the devil, they have no sympathy that I can discern. They have no fear of offence. They are much too busy getting in your face with their music and their “liberty.”

Live in contemporary dreamland if you want, but this is not genuine biblical Christianity and it is yet another fundamental reason why I am opposed to the CCM movement.

6. SOFT ROCK IS NOT SENSUAL, DANGEROUS. AND WORLDLY LIKE HARD ROCK.

This is a strange, inconsistent position that is held only by those who have just recently begun walking on the CCM road. At first they say (and they might actually believe) that they are opposed to Christian rock, and what they mean by that is full-blown, get down, pull out the stops rock and roll.

Fundamentalists who begin to adapt CCM, don't start with full-blown rock. They still say that full-blown rock is wrong, but they use soft rock that has the same basic sensual rhythmic features.

The inconsistency of it all doesn't seem to bother them, and rarely are they challenged about it.

Biblically, how can you make a case for condemning hard rock that cannot be turned around to condemn soft rock?

There simply is no significant difference. Hard rock is just louder and more forceful. You don't have to be in danger of ruining your hearing like Pete Townshend of The Who to be addicted to rock.

This is why it is so important that pastors, music people, and parents get as much of an education as possible about contemporary music. It's not necessary to get a Ph.D. in music theory, but we need to have some basic understanding of rhythm. We need to listen to men like Graham West, Pastor of Tamworth Bible Baptist Church in Australia and director of Music Education Ministries. He has a background in writing and producing pop music and understands the essence of rock as well as anyone I know. His series on “The Rhythm of Rock” is available as a video download from the online catalog at the Way of Life web site.

I don't have any personal association with Pastor West. In fact, I have never met him, and I did not tell him that I was going to publish a warning about Lancaster. But he has supported me in this battle, and I greatly appreciate the wisdom God has given him about music. He could help IB churches like Lancaster if they would listen.

Graham West warns about beat anticipation, which is used frequently at Lancaster. It is a subtle form of syncopation that produces a physical swing effect and it is at the heart of modern pop music. (He also explains that syncopation in itself is not necessarily wrong, if used in moderation, but as another music expert said, in pop music syncopation is “a fundamental constant presence.”)

There are many aspects to the rock syncopation that create its danceability. Pop music uses syncopation to create a jerky, dancey feel. The music skips, stutters, pulsates. John Makujina in *Measuring the Music* says, “Rock’s danceability is due predominately to its emphasized syncopated rhythms, which invite the listener to supply the missing beats either mentally or through a series of physical gestures.”

In my new DVD presentation “Music for Good or Evil” I deal with six types of pop syncopation: the back beat, the silent beat, the staccato beat, the swing eighth, the break beat, and the anticipated beat. *The Rhythm Bible* has over 1,000 types of rhythmic styles that pop music uses. The essence of rock is much more than a heavy back beat.

West warns that when the anticipated beat and other forms of swing rhythm or pop syncopation are introduced to a church, even in the softest forms, the people quickly become addicted to it and they crave for more, just like a drug addict. Sensual music is that powerful. As Steven Tyler of Aerosmith says, “Rock music is the strongest drug in the world.”

West says:

“Once you begin listening to soft rock, you begin sliding down that slippery slope to the more aggressive forms of rock. Soft rock begins to orient the whole way of perceiving music around rhythm and away from melody. Your musical interest will change. Hymns will seem dull in comparison to your newly acquired tastes. It’s a progression I’ve seen over and over again in the lives of Christians. It’s a downward spiral. It happens in the lives of individuals; it happens in the lives of families; it happens in the lives of churches.

“There is a gray area of ignorance about the power of pop syncopation. And the devil, taking advantage of this, being not only the master musician but also the master of subtlety, comes along to a strong fundamental church or a Bible college and he offers his wares of CCM rock ballads.

“It sounds great. There’s no drums, no wild electric guitars, no obvious back beat, just the piano or guitar and the singer. And it’s ALMOST the same as the songs that they used to sing, except the rhythm kind of trips a little bit. But that’s O.K. because it’s exciting, and the young people love it.

“The problem is that when the rhythm does that little trip it means that the music contains a basic, distinctive rhythmic feature of all rock & roll since its inception in the 1950s.

“In this way, before you’ve even known it, you’ve been deceived by the subtle strategy of Satan. This is the blind spot that Satan is using to his advantage. He knows that once a church accepts rock ballads, complete capitulation is almost inevitable.

“In the case of vigilant, serious-minded Christians, he has to start them up at the very top of the slope with very gentle rock so that the conscience doesn’t scream out, ‘This music is wrong!’ Just as long as he can get you started, he has won, because just like a drug pusher he knows that his users will want more and more of that sensual rhythm” (Graham West, *The Rhythm of Rock*).

(Graham West's presentation "The Rhythm of Rock" is available as an immediate download from the eVideo section of the Way of Life Literature online bookstore.)

Dan Lucarini, a former contemporary worship leader, also says that the slide toward CCM begins with soft rock. In the book "Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement," he explains how that he led churches from a sacred music position to a contemporary position, and it was all about incrementalism. He did it in gradual steps, THE FIRST BEING THE ADOPTION OF SOFT ROCK.

Lucarini says:

"The rock was softer, but it still contained the rock rhythm that undeniably appeals to our flesh. The listener soon develops a craving for it. Just like an addict, there is no turning back. What happens over time is a steady slide."

A great many IB churches have already committed themselves to the soft rock slope, including some large churches and schools that are influencing many others to be comfortable with this direction.

Consider an "adapted CCM" number performed by a music group at Lancaster Baptist Church in California. We have taken an excerpt from the YouTube posting and put it on the Way of Life web site. First view this number and analyze it in your own mind.

<http://vimeo.com/20686944>

I asked Graham West to analyze the piece rhythmically and he replied in a passionate manner. He said that it is loaded with Beat Anticipation. Eight of the 10 phrases of the piece end in Beat Anticipation, plus it incorporates a heavy dose of other types of syncopation. He wrote:

"Taken together with the other forms of syncopation [used in the piece] we have a very common contemporary style in which the basis of the rock feel is achieved by the Beat Anticipation, and the other forms of syncopation simply take on board that rock feel because it is used within a context of the more dominating forms.

"Music exhibiting this kind of highly syncopated rhythmic patterns will always promote sensual body movements. Too many studies by people on both sides of the issue have been done to deny this. The compulsion to move the body when this kind of music is played is very great.

"It appears that the vocalists in this example have successfully suppressed sensual body movements, which may be due either to a keen awareness of their being inappropriate or to coaching. In my opinion this is dangerous spiritually because it masks the true nature of the music.

"If the body tends to move sensually [to a piece of music], the answer is not to suppress the movement, but to reject the music.

"If we accept that music is not neutral in its spiritual direction, then we dare not turn our backs on the warnings of so many godly men of the past and the testimony of so many wicked musicians

that it is the rhythm above all other features of contemporary music that promotes rebellion and sensuality.

"The essential spiritual character of fleshly music does not change if we dress nicely, or suppress sensual bodily movements, nor if we play on classical instruments, nor if we do it sincerely as an offering to God, nor if we do it with all our hearts, nor if the words are Biblical and edifying (in this case they are quite shallow).

"These are outward trimmings and do not change the spiritual character of the music itself and the consequences of that character will inevitably surface! *'Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?'* (Prov. 6:27-28).

"In my opinion, West Coast Bible College is heading in the wrong direction musically and has been for some time and if it continues in this direction it will pay a high price for not listening to the musicians, the prophets, the men of God who have been warning God's people about these things for 20 and 30 years.

"I plead with you to open your minds to this. Could it just be that Satan, the master musician and the master of subtlety, has used both to infiltrate the church of the last days to rob it of its glory and spiritual power?" (West, "Analysis of Vocal Syncopation in 16 Bars of 'My Friend,'" March 5, 2011).

Graham West, we repeat, has an extensive background in writing and producing pop music before God changed the direction of his life. He knows the character of the world's music as well as any fundamental Baptist preacher alive today, and he is deeply concerned.

This illustrates what is happening widely. Many IB churches are adapting CCM, but while they think they are removing the "rock" from Christian rock, they are actually just toning it down to "soft rock." They think they have tamed the rock beast by softening it, but they are only deceiving themselves. Many men of God are warning us that the adoption of this soft rock will eventually lead to full-blown CCM, if not in the church services, then at least in the private lives of the people, if not under the present administrations, at least under the next.

The only hope is that these churches leap off the sled that is already racing down the hill and grab hold of something solid and laboriously climb back off the slope. I've never heard of a church doing that, but by God's grace anything is possible if the leaders and people are repentant of the direction they have taken and are unreservedly committed to doing whatever is required.

7. TO APPLY BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO THINGS SUCH AS MUSIC IS GOING BEYOND SCRIPTURE.

I don't have a quote right at hand, but fundamental Baptist college students who have written to defend the adaptation of CCM have often brought up the philosophy that since the Bible doesn't specifically condemn it, then it is not right to apply more general biblical principles.

While the Bible doesn't condemn hard rock or soft rock or really any aspect of CCM's music specifically, it does address such things in principle.

The Bible doesn't specifically condemn wearing a bikini while teaching a Sunday School class, yet even the most liberal churches don't allow that.

The same is true for the use of marijuana. This drug is not mentioned in the Bible by name, but there are biblical principles that apply to its use, such as being sober-minded, not being under the mastery of anything other than Christ, having a good testimony before others, and avoiding even the appearance of evil.

Likewise, the following are a few of the Bible principles that are applicable to Contemporary Christian Music:

- the principle of separation from end-time apostasy (2 Timothy 3:5)
- the principle of not conforming to and not loving the world (Romans 12:2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-16)
- the principle of doctrinal purity (1 Timothy 1:3)
- the principle that our music should be spiritual (Colossians 3:16)
- the principle of making a clear distinction between the holy and the profane (Ezekiel 22:6)
- the principle of being sober-minded and spiritually vigilant (1 Peter 5:8)
- the principle of not communing with devils (1 Corinthians 10:21; 1 Timothy 4:1)

And those are only a start.

Consider just one of these: the Bible principle of separation from the world as expressed in the following Scriptures:

“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Proverbs 4:14-15)

“I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked” (Psalms 26:4-5).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

“Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12).

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

Strict separation from the world is a major teaching of Scripture. It is a fundamental Bible doctrine.

It was this doctrine that convinced me as a young Christian that I had to give up rock & roll if I was going to please the Lord. It wasn't an easy decision, because my flesh loved rock. I had long been addicted to the backbeat, the sensuality and fleshly excitement of it.

I didn't give up rock because I was some sort of legalistic Pharisee. I was just a young Christian seeking the Lord's will.

I didn't give up rock because someone was preaching against it. My pastor at the time knew next to nothing about rock music and never mentioned it in his preaching.

I gave up rock for one reason, and that was because I believed that God's Word required that I separate from such things, and that decision was based on the aforementioned Scriptures.

But it wasn't because the Bible says anything specific about rock music. It doesn't say anything about it directly, but it says plenty about it in principle!

God's Word makes it perfectly clear that separation from the world, non-conformity to the world, is not an optional part of Christianity. The contemporary principle that you can be “theologically conservative and culturally liberal” is heresy.

Watch any typical CCM performance and there is an obvious conformity to the world. The musicians sound and look exactly like the world. They dance sensually just like the world. The CCM promotionalism and awards system and charting system are all patterned after the world. Their marriages break up about as often as the world's. They often curse like the world and drink like the world. They love R-rated movies and trashy sitcoms like the world. They love any sort of secular rock & roll like the world.

How is this not “worldly”?

As far as I can discern, if there is such a thing as worldliness as defined by 1 John 2:16 -- the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life -- it would have to describe the modern pop music field and the pop culture and its religious counterpart, Contemporary Christian Music.

Therefore, we could not disagree more with those who claim that the Bible has nothing to say about the use of contemporary music in the churches.

It has a lot to say in principle.

8. MUSICAL SOUNDS CANNOT BE LABELED GOOD OR EVIL.

Consider the following statement:

“My strongest conflict is that a certain sound is defined as ‘good’ or ‘evil.’ What really constitutes an evil sound? Is a traditional hymn what we should consider a ‘good’ sound? What about classical music? Are there certain pieces that we should not be listening to because of a certain harmonic, melodic or rhythmic pattern found in the music?”

In reply we would say that it’s not a matter of the sound itself being good or evil; it is a matter of the sound creating a certain effect and it is a matter of the sound representing a certain philosophy.

The back beat and beat anticipation and other types of rock syncopations are not evil in themselves, but they have a sensual effect, because the body wants to move into the gaps created by the musical style. This is not an accident. The creators of rock music have always aimed for this sensuality, to make people want to dance and to create a feeling of liberty and license.

The effect is sexual, and the rockers themselves have often stated this. Jimi Hendrix, for example, said, “I guess my music is sexy, but what music with a big beat isn’t?”

He was absolutely right. Music with a big beat is sexy because of the effect it has on the human body. Also, this type of sound reflects the philosophy of rock music, which is to let yourself go, do your thing, don’t be restrained by laws, follow your heart.

The same is true for the “deceptive cadence,” which we deal with in *The Transformational Power of Contemporary Worship Music*. The deceptive cadence is not an evil sound, but its non-resolving character creates an emotional effect of restlessness and unease which is not a mark of godly music. A friend with a master’s degree in music observed,

“The deceptive cadence is charismatic in effect. It never resolves, so it builds you up and it gets you into an emotional frenzy where you feel that you are really worshipping God.”

That, of course, is the objective of charismatic music. It is focused on the pursuit of an emotional experience.

The unresolving chord structure also reflects the CCM philosophy of doctrinal relativism, of “let’s be flexible and not so dogmatic; let’s focus more on unity than doctrinal absolutes; let’s not be critical.”

9. IF WE ARE GOING TO REJECT CCM, WE SHOULD ALSO REJECT OLD HYMNS WRITTEN BY LUTHERANS AND METHODISTS AND THE KING JAMES BIBLE WRITTEN BY ANGLICANS.

It has been argued that since Baptist churches use Protestant hymns, it is acceptable to use contemporary worship songs that have a biblically-sound message.

A fundamental Baptist pastor asked the following question:

“What is the difference in using songs that every denomination uses across the board from the past (‘Just as I Am,’ ‘Amazing Grace,’ etc.) to using songs that everyone uses across the board in the present (‘How Deep the Father’s Love for Us,’ ‘Holy Ground,’ ‘Majesty,’ etc.) if they follow Biblical principles and if we do not promote a particular artist whose lifestyle we don’t support?”

Another pastor said that if my position against CCM is true I should stop using the King James Bible because it was written by Anglicans.

If we buy into this argument, we will not be able to resist the onslaught of CCM in any effective manner except perhaps to stand against hard rock, and that stand won’t last very long. Those who accept soft rock will eventually accept “hard” rock. Both have the same sensual character.

The following is my reply to this popular challenge:

First, the old Protestant denominations were fundamentally different from their modern counterparts.

The old Lutherans and Methodists were militant for the Christian faith and were not infiltrated by theological modernism, Darwinian evolution, and other new thinking.

Unlike modern Protestants and “evangelicals” and the Contemporary Christian Music crowd, the old Protestants separated from the Roman Catholic Church. They hated Popery. They were spiritual warriors, militant for what they believed.

Consider, for example, the translators of the King James Bible.

One of Francis Dillingham’s books was *A Dissuasive against Popery*.

Lawrence Chaderton gave up his inheritance in order to convert to Protestantism against the will of his wealthy Catholic father.

Thomas Ravis, president of the Oxford company responsible for translating Isaiah to Malachi, “was very severe in his denunciation of anything which savoured of popery.”

John Rainolds was one of England’s greatest champions for Protestantism. He publicly refuted Catholic giants such as Cardinal Bellarmine of Rome.

Whenever Thomas Holland went on a journey he would gather together the fellows of Exeter College, Oxford, and exhort them as follows, “I commend you to the love of God, and to the hatred of popery and superstition.”

(For documentation of these facts see *The Glorious History of the English Bible*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

In fact, the old Protestants were closer, spiritually and doctrinally, to the position of today’s old-fashioned Baptist church than to that of the contemporary movement.

Second, CCM represents an end-time movement that is diametrically opposed to and is an avowed enemy of every “old-fashioned” Bible-believing church and family.

Contemporary worship music has transformational power that no Protestant hymn has.

There is a transformational power in contemporary worship that can and eventually always will change the character of a Bible-believing separatist church.

The use of a doctrinally-sound hymn by Luther or Wesley does not put people in danger of becoming Lutherans or Methodists. I have never heard of an independent Baptist becoming a Lutheran by singing “A Mighty Fortress.”

I’ve never heard of a youth group becoming Anglican by using the King James Bible, but show me a youth group that is messing with contemporary music, and I will show you one that is on a fast track to the world and to a full-blow contemporary stance.

The use of CCM is turning IFB churches into contemporary churches everywhere (as it did with Highland Park Baptist Church, home of my alma mater, Tennessee Temple). Contemporary worship is ALWAYS in the midst of those great changes, as we have documented in the free eBook *The Collapse of Biblical Separatism*.

That is because CCM is not just music written by people who hold some questionable doctrines; it represents an end-time movement that is diametrically opposed to an “old-fashioned” Bible stance, a movement that is an enemy of what an “old-fashioned” Baptist church stands for.

The CCM crowd hates biblical separatism, and this is true for even the most conservative among them.

Consider the very popular contemporary hymn writers, Keith and Kristyn Getty. As we have seen, their songs are used widely among “traditional, non-contemporary” churches, because they are considered relatively safe.

Yet the Getty’s one-world-church goal is to “bring everyone together musically” (www.keithgetty.com). In July 2012 the Gettys and their close friend Stuart Townend joined Roman Catholic Matt Maher on NewsongCafe on WorshipTogether.com. The program

promoted ecumenical unity, with Maher/Townend/Getty entirely one in spirit through the music. They played and discussed “The Power of the Cross,” which was co-written by Getty/Townend.

Dan Lucarini, author of *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement: Confessions of a Former Worship Leader*, says:

“No one should deny the power of music to proselytize! Pastors in particular must defend their flocks from false teaching, heresies and ‘ear ticklers’ who bring worldly sensuality into the congregation; you are right to point out how easily this comes into a church through worship music. It seems wiser to decline the use of what seems to be a perfectly good song, rather than to give any honor and hint of endorsement to the composer and his/her mission” (e-mail, May 24, 2009).

Third, the old Protestants believed in the same God and the same Christ as fundamental Baptists, but the Contemporary Christian Music world is filled with false christs and false gods.

Whatever doctrinal differences a Baptist would have with Martin Luther or John Wesley or Fanny Crosby or KJV translators such as John Rainolds, we share the same Christ and the same God, but that is often not true for Contemporary Christian Worship.

The world of contemporary worship is a terribly dangerous world filled with gross heresies and false christs, and those who play with this music build bridges to this world.

There is the non-Trinitarian god of Jesus Only Pentecostals such as Geron Davis, Joel Hemphill, Mark Carouthers, Phillips, Craig and Dean, and Lanny Wolfe. There is the non-judgmental male/female god of *The Shack*. There is the rock & roll party-dude christ and the rebel christ of Christian rockers such as P.O.D. There is the Rob Bell god who would not send people to hell. All of these and more are popular among Contemporary Christian artists.

We have documented this amazing and frightful truth in the chapter “Why We Are Opposed to CCM.”

Fourth, in this age we must be doubly cautious about using hymns of dubious doctrine and association.

In the Internet age, people are only a Google search and a mouse-click away from associating with authors and song writers.

By promoting the contemporary hymns of the Getty’s, for example, West Coast Baptist College and Majesty Music and Bob Jones University and Northland University and others are encouraging people to join hands with the Gettys. Many of those who learn about the Getty’s music from these sources will doubtless find them on the Web and be influenced by their rock & roll “music is neutral” philosophy and their ecumenical stance and dangerous associations.

with CCM, are playing with fire; and their people, especially the next generation, are going to be burned.

These preachers can huff and puff at me all they want, and they can try to make *me* the issue in this battle, but it doesn't change the fact that they are playing with fire. It doesn't change the dangerous character of contemporary worship music.

Time will tell, but it will be too late for those who don't wake up and draw clear lines of separation from contemporary worship today.

Fifth, we have never said that if a hymn is old it is good or if it is new it is bad.

We must examine every hymn as to its musical character and doctrinal purity.

There are hymns in the standard hymnals used by independent Baptist churches that shouldn't be used because they are not theologically sound (e.g., "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations") or ridiculously shallow and lacking in doctrinal substance (e.g., "The Church in the Wildwood").

10. AN EMPHASIS ON "A HEART FOR GOD" IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MUSIC OR ANY "EXTERNAL" THING.

A Bible college graduate wrote the following:

"While at West Coast Baptist College one the most important things I learned was the importance of having a heart for God. The music was a lot more of a concern to me when I first started to hear it and I thought of the fact that it was CCM artists that perform it."

I agree with the importance of emphasizing "the heart" as long as this is defined properly in today's context. It is so important to emphasize the heart and true godliness as opposed to mere externals, and I have tried to emphasize that in my ministry (such as in the book *Keeping the Kids*). I have often been discouraged at the shallow emphasis on the externals and neglect of the heart issue in many fundamental Baptist churches.

But this is no excuse for going down the road of saying that music doesn't matter as long as the "heart is right." That is one of the fundamental philosophies of CCM and the emerging church, and it is heretical and eventually leads to a complete collapse of godly standards and even of absolute truth itself. This is because of the subjectivity of the principle and the duplicitous nature of the human heart.

The philosophy of testing music by the passion for God exhibited by the performers and listeners or by whether my heart is blessed by it is the mystical charismatic approach, which lies at the heart of CCM.

This philosophy is akin to John Piper's Christian Hedonism doctrine. He says, "God is most satisfied with us when we are most satisfied with Him." A passion for God is promoted as THE

major principle and sanctifier of the Christian life. As Dr. Peter Masters of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London says:

“Delighting in God ... is made the organising principle for every other spiritual experience and duty. It becomes the key formula for all spiritual vigour and development. Every other Christian duty is thought to depend on how well we obey this central duty of delighting in the Lord. The entire Christian life is simplified to rest upon a single quest, which is bound to distort ones perception of the Christian life and how it must be lived” (“Christian Hedonism - Is It Right?” *Sword & Trowel*, 2002, No. 3).

Only a fool would say that a passion for God is not the most important thing in the universe; but it is also true that it is easy to deceive ourselves that we are being passionate about God when we are actually being passionate about ourselves. It is not a sufficient standard for saints who are still “in the flesh” in this present sin-cursed world.

The Bible warns that “the heart is deceitful above all things” (Jer. 17:9), and, “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26).

The passions of the heart must be continually and always tested by the clear teaching of God’s Word. If a “passion for God” were THE important standard of Christian living, the New Testament would make no sense. Take the book of Ephesians. It contains some 88 specific commandments, by my reckoning, that the grace-saved, born again believer is obligated to obey. Why didn’t Paul just summarize everything with one simple principle?

The test of our music is not merely whether our heart is pleased with it and whether we feel that we are being passionate for God when we enjoy it. A proper biblical test involves many things. We have laid some of these out in this book, such as the following:

- Is the music conformed to the world?
- Can the music be identified as “the lust of the flesh” or “the lust of the eyes” or the “pride of life”?
- Is the music associated with end-time apostasy?
- Is the music doctrinally unsound or even doctrinally questionable?
- Does the music lead to a lack of sober-mindedness and spiritual vigilance?
- Does the music fail to make a clear distinction between the holy and the profane?

If the answer to any of these is yes, then it doesn’t matter whether or not I think I like the music because of my heart for God. It is still wrong!

[For more on this subject see *Music for Good and Evil*, a video series available on DVD or as an eDownload, and the new book *Independent Baptist Music Wars*, at the online catalog at the Way of Life Literature web site.]

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